

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 14841 080731Z

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01 TRSE-00 SAM-01 /053 W

----- 059387

O R 080642Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2121

INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE NEW DELHI 14841

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, IN

SUBJECT: REACTION TO SUPREME COURT DECISION

1. DELHI MORNING DAILIES CARRIED BANNER HEADLINES ON THE SUPREME COURT'S EXONERATION OF MRS. GANDHI. LENGTHLY EXCERPTS FROM THE FIVE SEPARATE JUDGMENTS NUMBERING 548 PAGES WERE REPRODUCED ON THE FRONT AND INSIDE PAGES. EDITORIALS IN THE CAPITOL'S LEADING NEWSPAPERS WELCOMED THE DECISION. AFTER HAILING THE DECISION, THE CONGRESS ALIGNED "NATIONAL HERALS" LEAD EDITORIAL ALLUDED TO A CONTRADICTION BETWEEN THE PARLIAMENT'S AMENDING POWER AND THE JUDICIARY'S JUDICIAL REVIEW FUNCTION THAT WILL BE DECIDED IN THE UPCOMING REVIEW OF THE 1973 FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS CASE. THE DITORIAL ENDED BY NOTING "BUT UNTIL THE SUPREME COURT DECIDES ON THE CRUCIAL QUESTIONS OF WHAT IS 'BASIC', IT WILL NOT BE CLEAR WHETHER THERE IS IMMEDIATE NEED FOR A CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY NOT ONLY TO AMEND THE CONSTITUTION BUT TO REVISE IT."

2. THE LARGER "NONCOMMITTED" NEWSPAPERS WELCOMED THE COURT'S DECISION AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO RELAX RESTRICTIONS WITHOUT RETURNING TO THE INDISCIPLINE AND FREE FOR ALL POLITICS THAT

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EXISTED BEFORE THE EMERGENCY. THE PRO-SOVIET CPI "PATRIOT"

IN ITS LEAD EDITIRIAL WELCOMED THE COURT'S VINDICATION OF MRS. GANDHI, BUT NOTED THAT THE DECISION HAS LEFT "THE CRUCIAL PROBLEM UNSOLDED--NAMELY WHETHER OUR PARLIAMENT WHEN EXERCISING ITS CONSTITUENT AUTHORITY IS INDEED THE SOVEREIGN POLITICAL BODY OF OUR DEMOCRACY."

3. CONGRESS POLITICIANS, CONGRESS PARTY STATE LEADERSHIP BODIES AND CONGRESS PARLIAMENTARY PARTIES IN THE STATE LEGISLATURES FLOODED DELHI TELEGRAPH OFFICES WITH MESSAGES OF CONGRATULATIONS AND SUPPORT TO THE PRIME MINISTER. LABOR AND BUSINESS LEADERS AROUND THE COUNTRY FOLLOWED SUIT. A MEETING OF CONGRESS LEADERS IN DELHI PASSED A RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING SUPPORT FOR MRS. GANDHI ON BEHALF OF THE PARTY AND INDIAN PEOPLE. CPI GENERAL SECRETARY RAO DECLARED THE DECISION "A FITTING REBUFF TO THE DARK FORCES OF REACTION AND IMPERIALISM WHICH WANT TO THROW OUR COUNTRY INTO ANARCHY AND CHAOS USING EVERY WEAPON THAT COMES IN HANDY FOR THEIR NEFARIOUS PLANS". THE CPI'S "PATRIOT" QUOTED A TASS COMMENTARY AS CLAIMING THE DECISION "CONVINCINGLY PROVES" THAT "REACTIONARIES' ATTEMPTS TO HINDER THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRESSIVE REFORMS ARE DOOMED TO FAILURE...JUSTICE HAS TRIUMPHED. THE ABSURD FRAME UP OF THE RECOGNIZED LEADER OF A NATION OF 600 MILLION HAS COLLAPSED."

4. IN HER COMMENTS TO A CROWD OUTSIDE HER RESIDENCE (REPORTED SEPT 11) FOLLOWING TO SUPREME COURT VERDICT, AND IN A STATEMENT LATE NOVEMBER 7 TO CONGRESS PARTY LEADERS, MRS. GANDHI STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING STABILITY IN THE FACE OF INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL THREATS "IN OUR COUNTRY AND OUR NEIGHBORHOOD", AS WELL AS THE NEED TO PRESS AHEAD WITH ECONOMIC PROGRAMS. IN REPORTING HER REMARKS TO THE LATTER MEETING, THE "NATIONAL HERALD" QUOTES HER AS SAYING "ELECTIONS MIGHT OR MIGHT NOT BE ROUND THE CORNER BUT THE URGENCY TO FULFILL THE TASKS AHEAD SHOULD BE THE MOTIVATION BEHIND CONGRESS". THE "PATRIOT" QUOTES HER AS URGING HER AUDIENCE "TO EDUCATE THE INDIAN PEOPLE POLITICALLY BOTHH ABOUT INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL DANGERS, IRRESPECTIVE OF THE FACT WHETHER THE ELECTION WAS ROUND THE CORNER OR NOT."

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, SUPREME COURT, COURT DECISIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 NOV 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: KelleyW0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975NEWDE14841
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750389-0092
From: NEW DELHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751162/aaaacdhd.tel
Line Count: 99
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: KelleyW0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06 AUG 2003 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <25 NOV 2003 by KelleyW0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REACTION TO SUPREME COURT DECISION
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, IN, (GANDHI, INDIRA)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006